

BE READY FOR THE BEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE!

AUGUST 1, 2021

WORSHIP

Days of Elijah, Amazing God, 10,000 Reasons, Blessed Assurance, Be Ready

WELCOME

How would you describe a bride getting ready for her “big day”? Do you feel the same way about the coming again of Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom? Why or why not?

WORD

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

General Douglas MacArthur gave a promise to the Filipinos and to his soldiers – “I shall return”. He was reluctant to leave the Philippines in WW II. A good general, he believed, will not leave the troops behind. He had no choice, however, because he was commanded to do so by no less than the US President. He was able to fulfill his promised return – but also apologized because he was late. By the time he landed on Oct. 20, 1944 in Leyte, 1/3 of his soldiers have already died. Jesus made a similar promise, but the difference is He will never be late. His timing is perfect. When Jesus comes back, He will reign, God’s people will triumph, and evil will be vanquished. When Jesus returns, there will be complete victory!

As we close our END GAME series, we ask the question: ARE YOU READY FOR THE BEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE? Remember, the best on earth may not always be the best... everything in this life – even the quality of joy and happiness here, is nothing compared to what God has prepared for us!

Our passage in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** teaches us the following:

1. RETURN

Beginning **v.13**, we see how Paul pointed out that the knowledge of truth is crucial. He was addressing the deep grief (**Gk. Lype**) that the Thessalonians felt about their fellow believers who have (asleep). Paul reminded them about Jesus’ resurrection to show the reality that death is not final. Believing His return and eagerly welcoming it will impact the way you think and process life. Notice the believers’ focus is on the return of Jesus (**1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**) – why is this important? If we are conscious that Jesus can come anytime, we will desire to serve Him well at all times. The fact that Jesus will return can also help sanctify and strengthen us.

There’s nothing wrong with enjoying what God has blessed you with, but we have to keep in mind that what Jesus promised is something BETTER. Be careful not to fall in love with this world; hold things loosely. God has prepared something greater (**1 Corinthians 2:9**). David wrote in **Psalms 16:11** that “fullness of joy” and “pleasures forever” can all be found in God’s presence. How is your perspective on these things? Are you aware that Jesus is coming again? The return of Jesus is going to change everything!

2. RAPTURE

Following the flow of Paul’s statement, in **v.15-18** he talks about the resurrection of the dead and the “rapture” (**Gk. Harpazo**). He first described the sequence – “the dead in Christ will rise first”, at the sounding of the trumpet and the shout of the

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archangel. Paul described this further in another letter (**1 Cor. 15:51-52**) where he emphasized the “glorified body” that believers will experience. The question many people ask is **WHEN** this will all happen.

We highlighted 3 views about the rapture in relation to tribulation and the millennial reign. Some scholars believe the rapture will happen pre-tribulation, some believe it will happen mid-tribulation, and some subscribe to a post-tribulation timing. We are told that the only thing that’s sure and definitive is that Jesus is coming again, and all these things shall unfold in God’s perfect timing. As to the sequence, what follows the resurrection of the dead is the snatching away (rapture) of those who are alive. **Revelation 20** gives us further perspectives on this as it speaks of another resurrection at the end of the tribulation period (**Revelation 20:4-6**). After this, the final judgment commences (**Revelation 20:11-12**). Furthermore, in **Revelation 20:13-15**, we see the second death, with finality, where we either end up eternally separated from God or with eternal joy in His presence. Paul described death of believers in **2 Corinthians 5:8** as “absent from the body, present with the Lord”. Spiritual death means eternal separation from God of those who refuse Christ. That is the second death—eternally, soul and body separated from God. The rapture will indeed be the best day of anybody’s life, only if you are in **CHRIST**. It’s the worst day if you are not, and you have not been ready for Jesus’ second coming.

3. REWARD

In **v. 18**, Paul gives a command to “comfort one another with these words”. Even Jesus in **Revelation 22:12** speaks of His coming soon to encourage and inspire those of us who believe in Him. He mentions that rewards are with Him – and we have to understand this is different from salvation which is a free gift. Rewards are for the good works we did in our lifetime as a result of our redemption in Christ. The Bible speaks of these types of crowns, and how they are rewards for faithful service, love, and dedication to the Lord. An example of this is found in **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** – an “imperishable wreath” for those who lived a holy and disciplined life. Another example is in **James 1:12** – the “**crown of life**”, granted to those who persevere under trials and continues to **LOVE** the Lord. **2 Timothy 4:8** also speaks of the “**crown of righteousness**” – and if we think of these rewards, how will it impact our lives? The best part is, these will all be offered to God as our act of worship to glorify Him above all else! What will make us faithful to the end? We need to guard our hearts (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**), and make sure we truly love the Lord (**1 Corinthians 16:22**). With all the things we’ve learned in this series, may we all look forward to that amazing day – the best day of our lives – and cry out **MARANATHA**, come Lord Jesus!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

How do I prepare so I will be ready for the best day of my life?

2. Setting It Right

How should the reality of Christ’s Return, Rapture, and Reward impact your life? Are there things you would want to make right in order to live a life pleasing to the King?

3. Living It Out

Think of ways to share this great truth to others, and help them prepare for the best day of their lives!

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people and nations to turn to Jesus Christ in their pain and suffering, especially in this ongoing pandemic. Continue to care for those around you in tangible ways. Share the gospel with urgency, as we await Christ’s return!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
A God-centered Philippines
Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

Worship and Training Center
Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

Deeper intimate relationship with God
Righteous living
Salvation of family and friends



Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Revelation 22:12